

Keynote Speaker

Investigating Intersubjectivity as a Discursive Achievement in Interpreter-Mediated Encounters: Building a Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

This paper relates to a wider research project on the ways in which intersubjective understanding is accomplished, sustained and enhanced in encounters involving interpreter-mediation. It is underpinned by an assumption that the general lack of *attention to* the existence of a professional intercultural and its inner workings by service providers and interpreters has implications, *inter alia*, for the quality of service and ability of service providers to adapt to interpreter mediation in the workplace.

Investigating intersubjectivity is a multilayered process that appeals to a range of research traditions in building a picture of intersubjective understanding in interpreter-mediated encounters. My wider project concerns three strands of investigation: perceptual frames of the occupational other that are 'brought to' the interaction; discursive accomplishment of intersubjective understanding in interaction, and the self-reflexivity of the actor in responding to his/her context both during interaction and as a post-hoc activity.

This paper focuses on the second strand mentioned above, namely the discursive accomplishment of intersubjective understanding, and considers in particular the extent to which service providers and interpreters orient to each other's 'occupational otherness' during interaction to form shared understandings, and the extent to which the intercultural is recognised and (re-)constructed discursively during the interaction. The discussion is premised on an assumption that the lack of scope for the interpreter to 'display' his/her occupational otherness during interaction precludes the service provider from developing a deep understanding of the professional intercultural and potentially limits the self-reflexivity required to adapt to service delivery in this mode.

The paper draws on research on workplace discourse practices from the conversation analytic tradition and sociocultural approaches to mind, in building a conceptual framework to analyse the discursive accomplishment of intersubjective understanding. Particular attention is given to the discussion of concepts such as the multivoicedness of meaning and the heterogeneity of voices (following Wertsch, 1991) and modes of talk in the workplace (following Roberts and Sarangi, 1999).